



■ Ensign Jennifer Makowski uses thrusters to carefully guide the Coast Guard cutter Juniper into position to haul out the Cerberus Shoal lighted bell buoy south of Fishers Island.



■ Left, Boatswain's Mate 2nd class Gregory Shriver uses an oxy-acetylene cutting torch to remove a shackle on the buoy anchor chain for Bartlett Reef lighted bell buoy 4.

■ Below, The cutter Juniper lists as the six-ton Cerberus Shoal lighted bell buoy is lowered back on station after its beacons were upgraded.



■ With a replacement solar panel on the table in the foreground, the deck crew of the Juniper holds a safety briefing before they begin their work. The heavy work on a wet deck is hazardous, and safety is stressed again and again.



Battling the elements — and their leavings

From A.1

Rhode Island, also inspected the Bartlett Reef Lighted Bell Buoy 4, located about 3 miles southwest of New London Ledge Lighthouse in Long Island Sound. Wester used the opportunity to install an LED. The crew pulled alongside the red buoy, weighing 12,000 lbs., and used the crane to drag it onto the deck. After the chain was disconnected between the buoy and its anchor, called a sinker, Seaman Juan Reyes climbed to the top of the 26-foot-tall buoy. Reyes, an aids to navigation technician, carefully cut the cable that connected the light to the batteries and unscrewed the lighting equipment, while Boatswain's Mate

2nd-Class Gregory Shriver removed the batteries. They had already programmed the new lantern by remote control. "I love them," Reyes said of the LEDs. "With the old lights, you have batteries to change or lamps to replace. With this, you just slap it on, put a few bolts in and it's ready to go." Reyes said the Coast Guard should have made the switch to LEDs "a long time ago" because they save so much time and effort. The Coast Guard has called for the replacement of 50 percent of the incandescent lights on red and green buoys by the end of fiscal 2008, 75 percent by the end of fiscal 2010. When a ship is traveling into a channel, red buoys are on the right and

green buoys are on the left. While the technicians were at work, other crewmembers inspected the buoy's 270-foot chain. Several feet of chain attached to the concrete sinker were twisted and knotted. The entire chain had to be replaced with three 90-foot sections of spare chain. Seaman Dillon Smith and Reyes pounded superheated shackle pins between the sections to attach them. Seaweed, algae and mussels clinging to the hull were scraped off, and the buoy was lowered back into the water. The cutter's thrusters kicked in, and the Juniper pulled away. LEDs require far less maintenance, Wester said. About 70 percent of the cutter's an-

nual 2,000 hours under way are currently devoted to buoy tending. The goal is 60 percent. With the conversion to LEDs, the 45-member crew could eventually spend more time on other activities. The multi-mission ship is also responsible for law enforcement, which consists mainly of patrolling fisheries, homeland security, ice breaking, search and rescue and marine environmental response when there is pollution. The Juniper is responsible for 214 buoys, 175 of which are lit, from the southern shore of Cape Cod to the New York City area. Since last December, the crew has converted more than a third of the lit buoys to LEDs. After a severe storm two weeks ago, six

buoys in the Juniper's area were extinguished and two were adrift. Wester said the damage to the six buoys could have been prevented with LEDs. "I've seen a buoy sink with an LED that was recovered 30 hours later and it was still blinking," he said. While the LEDs have been reliable, Wester said he realizes there still could be problems. The Cerberus Shoal buoy now has solar panels on its four sides and one small panel on top. Wester said he did not think guano would extinguish the buoy's light again, but admitted, "It could happen if you had a bird with really good aim."

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Louisiana museum exhibit to tell story of Hurricane Katrina

New Orleans (AP) — Hurricane Katrina will be memorialized in powerful detail in a major exhibition the Louisiana State Museum plans to open in 2008 in the historic Presbytere. Everything from a blue tarp to a Coast Guard helicopter rescue basket to Fats Domino's flood-damaged piano will tell some of the story. In addition to photographs and audiovisual presentations, the museum also may engage storm survivors to tell their stories in person. The 9,500-square-foot Katrina exhibit has been envisioned by the museum's director, David Kahn, who came to the job a year ago

from the Connecticut Historical Society Museum in Hartford. At the time, several of the museum's New Orleans buildings remained closed, large parts of its collections were in temporary storage, attendance and revenue were down, and the system had lost many employees. Even so, Kahn insisted he was taking the job with his eyes wide open. As a state agency, Kahn said, the museum suffered less financial strain than some Orleans cultural institutions that were entirely dependent on the patronage of tourists and local residents. Gov. Kathleen Blanco has called for in-

creasing the museum's budget by more than 40 percent for the state's next fiscal year, from just under \$6 million this year to \$8.5 million next year. The extra money will let the museum hire several additional curators and enough security guards and maintenance workers to reopen three of its historic properties — the Old U.S. Mint, Madame John's Legacy and the 1850 House — for the first time since Katrina. Kahn said the museum is continuing interview visitors and local residents about what sorts of exhibits they want and expect the museum system to offer. But the Katrina

display already is expected to open by April 2008. The exhibit is expected to cover many aspects of the Katrina story: the storm's formation, the evacuation, levee failures, rooftop rescues, the darkest days at the Superdome, how help finally arrived and when people began moving back to New Orleans. The museum has been collecting artifacts to help tell that story since immediately after the storm. The exhibit also is expected to feature taped interviews with survivors, and stations where people who lived through Katrina can record their own experiences.

"We think this is going to touch people in a very real way," Kahn said. To ensure that the displays do not get too intense for children, he said, the museum may have a child psychologist review the plans and identify potential problems. The Katrina exhibit is expected to cost \$3.4 million. The museum has raised about \$500,000 and has grant applications pending with companies, foundations and other potential supporters. Although some applications have been turned down, Kahn said he was optimistic the target would be reached.